

SOCIO ECONOMICS FACTORS THAT EFFECT WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

Women credibility and advancement in educations gives them so many choices to take part into economy whether as a labour force or an entrepreneur. Plus, parallel with the improvement of technologies and the high cost of living, women have no choice to survive other than working. Looking forward to a standard of living, most of women in Malaysia tend to keep working even after married. This situation brought to a worse life balance among women especially those who have married

DATA SOURCE

This study only focused on respondent who are ever married women aged 15–59 years old and currently working. The data used for this study were obtained from the Fifth Malaysia Population

OBJECTIVE

This paper seeks to determine the factors that influence work life balance among women in Malaysia. This is explored with regard to whether the factors recorded affect the work life balance among women in Malaysia. The scope of the study will be concentrated toward married working women aged from 15 to 59. This paper finally concludes with discussion on the alternatives that women in Malaysia can take to get a better work life balance

and Family Development Board in 2014. A multi-stage stratified random sampling was adopted to collect data. A total of 7,644 ever married women aged 15 to 59 years old in Malaysia were successfully interviewed. Ever married women who did not provide information selected variables were excluded from the analysis. The study is based on a sample of 3,200 ever married working women.

FINDING

Data for 3,217 respondents all information needed for this study were selected from the study. The distribution of respondents based on their socio demographic characteristics is shown in Table 1.

Table 2 show that slightly near one of fifth (17.8 per cent) of the women having problem to balance their role between work and family. In terms of ethnic groups, Indian and Chinese women had a higher proportion who have work life balance problem compared to Malay women. There is a higher proportion of those who have work life problem among women aged 35 to 39 years old compared to the other age groups. The least likely to have work life balance problem were women aged 55–59 years old and below 25 years old. This is probably because most women below 25 years old are newlyweds and have no kids or small children to take care for those who are on 55–59 years age category

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Women in Malaysia

Variable	Categories	Percentage
Ethnicity	• Malay	68.0
	• Others Bumiputera	14.0
	• Chinese	11.0
	• Indian	7.1
Age	• Below 25	3.8
	• 25-29	9.0
	• 30-34	15.2
	• 35-39	15.5
	• 40-44	16.3
	• 45-49	18.1
	• 50-54	13.1
	• 55-59	9.0
Region	• Peninsular Malaysia	79.4
	• Sabah	8.5
	• Sarawak	12.0
Stratum	• Urban	65.5
	• Rural	34.5
Educational Level	• No Schooling and Primary	16.5
	• Secondary	51.5
	• Tertiary	32.0
Marital Status	• Currently Married	86.8
	• Widowed/ Divorced/ Separated	13.3

Mean Age = 41.2 (Standard Deviation: 9.45)

here is slightly difference in between women living in urban areas and those living in rural areas where 19.6 per cent women in urban area have work life balance problem compared women in rural area (14.3 per cent). By region, slightly more than 20 per cent of women who are living in Sarawak (21.2 per cent) have problem to balance their role between work and family compare to women in Sabah (19.7 per cent) and Peninsular Malaysia (17.1 per cent). In term of Educational Level, the percentage of women who have work life balance problem was higher among those with secondary and tertiary education than those who had no education or just primary education. There was no much difference between women who are currently married and women who are widowed/Divorced/Separated.

By work status, the proportion of women who have work life balance problem are higher among women who are work as employer (27.1 per cent) compare those who are government servant (21.4 per cent), Private Sector Employee (19.1) and self-employed (11.9 per cent). The proportion of women who have work life balance are higher for those who have 2 or 3 children compare for those who have less children. There is also higher proportion of women who having work life problem among those who have young children (aged below than 6 years old) compared those who doesn't have it.

Women who have parent/parent in law who are stay together with them and need special care are recorded higher proportion of having work life balance problem (23.0 per cent) compare for those who have parent/parent in law living separately and doesn't need special care. The living arrangement of husband also have impact on work-life balance among women. Women who are living separately with husband are recorded 20.2 per cent who had work life problem compared who stay together with husband (17.6%).

Table 2: Percentage of Women Who Have Work Life Balance Problem by Socio-Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Variable	Categories	Percentage
Dependent Variable: <i>Work life balance problem</i>	• Yes	17.7
	• No	82.3
Independent Variables: <i>Ethnicity</i>	• Malay	15.7
	• Others Bumiputera	18.8
	• Chinese	22.2
	• Indian	27.3
Age	• Below 25	13.0
	• 25-29	13.2
	• 30-34	22.2
	• 35-39	23.3
	• 40-44	18.6
	• 45-49	17.6
	• 50-54	13.4
	• 55-59	11.4
Stratum	• Urban	19.6
	• Rural	14.3
Region	• Peninsular Malaysia	17.1
	• Sabah	19.7
	• Sarawak	21.2
Educational Level	• No Schooling and Primary	12.7
	• Secondary	16.3
	• Tertiary	22.9
Marital Status	• Currently Married	17.8
	• Widowed/ Divorced/ Separated	18.2
Work Status	• Employer	27.1
	• Government Servant	21.4
	• Private Sector Employee	19.1
	• Self Employed	11.9
Occupation	• Managers	24.7
	• Professionals	23.2
	• Technicians And Associate Professionals	18.2
	• Clerical Support Workers	15.4
	• Service And Sales Workers	14.3
	• Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Livestock And Fishery Workers	16.5
	• Craft And Related Trades Workers	11.7
	• Plant And Machine Operators And Assemblers	18.1
	• Elementary Occupations	18.8
	• Below RM 1,000	13.9
Income	• RM1,000 - 1,999	17.1
	• RM 2,000 - 2,999	19.9
	• RM 3,000 - 3,999	23.5
	• RM 4,000 - 4,999	27.5
	• RM 5,000 and above	23.3
Number of living children	• 0	8.6
	• 1	16.8
	• 2	20.4
	• 3	21.5
	• 4 or more	17.0
Having children aged below 6 years	• No	15.0
	• Yes	23.2
Parent/Parent in living arrangement	• Living separately and doesn't need special care	16.9
	• Living separately and need special care	20.6
	• Living together and doesn't need special care	16.5
	• Living together and need special care	23.0
Family Friendly Facilities at working place*	• Not Provided	20.2
	• Provided	15.4
Family Friendly Facilities at working place*	• Living Separately	20.2
	• Living Together	17.6

(**Note:** * Flexible Working hour, full paid leave for taking sick children, maternity cost subsidy, childcare centre at work, facilities to store milk at work, work at home)
** Number of respondent less than 50

CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be concluded that ethnicity, stratum and having young children has great influence on the work life balance among working women in Malaysia. As children and elderly family members require additional care, the obligation to meet their needs can influence family roles, which can create inter-role conflict and impact family roles. Studies also reported that women having younger children experience more role conflicts. To overcome the issues of work life balance of women, employers need to adopt human resource strategies and family friendly policies in their organisation especially for those who have young kids.

